

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST TO AWARD AN HONORARY DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS DEGREE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**

**Action Requested:** Consider approval of the request by the University of Northern Iowa to award an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree to Nancy Powell at Spring 2015 Commencement.

**Executive Summary:** The University of Northern Iowa wishes to recognize Ambassador Powell for her leadership and vision in global politics and her respect for diverse ways of life.

**Details on Ambassador Powell's Accomplishments:**

- ◇ Ms. Powell, a native of Cedar Falls, graduated from the University of Northern Iowa in 1970 with a degree in History Teaching. Upon graduation, she began teaching high school social studies in Dayton, Iowa. During that time, she led a group of high school students to Pakistan, which inspired her to join the Foreign Service in 1977.
- ◇ One of her first assignments was as Nepal Desk Officer. Her first overseas assignment was at the embassy in Kathmandu, Nepal in 1980. She later served in posts in Pakistan, Canada, Togo, India, and Bangladesh.
- ◇ In 1997, Ms. Powell was named ambassador to Uganda. She also served as ambassador to Ghana (2001-02); Pakistan (2002-2004); and Nepal (2007-2009).
- ◇ Ambassador Powell became the Director General of the United States Foreign Service in 2009. She served in that position until her appointment as Ambassador to India in 2012; she was the first woman to serve as Ambassador to India. She retired from that position in May 2014.
- ◇ Ambassador Powell was a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and attained the highest possible rank of Career Ambassador, which is an honor sparingly bestowed.
- ◇ In 2003, Ambassador Powell won the Arnie Raphel award (named for the late ambassador to Pakistan) for her work in mentoring embassy staff while serving as ambassador to Pakistan. The citation for the award states that "through her dedication, concern, compassion, and competence, she has inspired a new generation to be more effective professionals and more compassionate human beings."
- ◇ In 2006, Ambassador Powell received the Homeland Security Service to America Medal for her work on avian influenza preparations while serving as the State Department's Senior Coordinator for Avian Influenza.
- ◇ In 2008, Ambassador Powell received the Heritage Honors Alumni Achievement Award, the most prestigious award given by the UNI Alumni Association.

- ◇ At Ambassador Powell's swearing-in ceremony in April 2012, the Deputy Secretary of State, William J. Burns, remarked that "there is no better choice to represent America in India at such a consequential time." He also noted that Ambassador Powell is the "very finest the Foreign Service has to offer" because of her "people-centric foreign policy...one that cherishes not only the people and cultures where she serves, but also the people that serve with her."
- ◇ Throughout her career, Ambassador Powell has remained a teacher at heart. She has been recognized for her mentoring and staff development programs. She has continued to champion the need for excellent education around the world through direct interactions with the people in the countries where she served.
- ◇ The University of Northern Iowa wishes to recognize Ambassador Powell for her tireless dedication to education and service to America.